

LOUIS ARMSTRONG



POPS:
THE 1940'S
SMALL-BAND
SIDES



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POPS: THE 1940'S SMALL-BAND SIDES



- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 I Want A Little Girl (3:01) | 11 Save It, Pretty Mama (4:32) |
| 2 Sugar (3:24) | 12 St. James Infirmary (3:39) |
| 3 Blues For Yesterday (2:34) | 13 Jack-Armstrong Blues (2:59) |
| 4 Blues In The South (3:01) | 14 Rockin' Chair (3:03) |
| 5 Do You Know What It Means
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| 6 Where The Blues
Were Born In New Orleans (3:03) | 16 Fifty-Fifty Blues (2:57) |
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| 8 Ain't Misbehavin' (3:56) | 18 Please Stop Playing Those Blues,
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| 9 Rockin' Chair (5:13) | 19 Before Long (2:52) |
| 10 Back O' Town Blues (4:15) | 20 Lovely Weather We're Having (3:15) |

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LOUIS ARMSTRONG

POPS: THE 1940'S SMALL-BAND SIDES

- 1 **I Want A Little Girl** (3:01)
(Billy Moll-Murray Mencher)
Shapiro, Bernstein & Co., Inc., (ASCAP)
- 2 **Sugar** (3:24)
(Maceo Pinkard-Edna Alexander-Sidney Mitchell)
CBS Robbins, (ASCAP)
- 3 **Blues For Yesterday** (2:34)
(Les Carr)
Modern Age Music Co., (BMI)
- 4 **Blues In The South** (3:01)
(Johnstone-Carr)
Modern Age Music Co., (BMI)
- 5 **Do You Know What It Means
To Miss New Orleans** (2:57)
(Lou Alter-Eddie DeLange)
Edwin H. Morris & Co., (ASCAP)
- 6 **Where The Blues Were Born In New Orleans** (3:03)
(Cliff Dixon-Bob Carleton)
Edwin H. Morris & Co., (ASCAP)

- 7 **Mahogany Hall Stomp** (2:56)
(Spencer Williams)
Mayfair Music Corp., (ASCAP)
- 8 **Ain't Misbehavin'** (3:56)
(Andy Razaf-Fats Waller-Harry Brooks)
Mills Music, (ASCAP)
- 9 **Rockin' Chair** (5:13)
(Hoagy Carmichael)
Frank Music Corp., (ASCAP)
- 10 **Back O' Town Blues** (4:15)
(Louis Armstrong-Luis Russell)
International Music Inc., (ASCAP)
- 11 **Save It, Pretty Mama** (4:32)
(Paul Denniker-Joe Davis-
Don Redman)
Mr. Joseph M. Davis, (BMI)
- 12 **St. James Infirmary** (3:39)
(Joe Primrose)
Mills Music, Inc., (ASCAP)
- 13 **Jack-Armstrong Blues** (2:59)
(Louis Armstrong-Jack Teagarden)
Terrace Music Inc., (ASCAP)
- 14 **Rockin' Chair** (3:03)
(Hoagy Carmichael)
Frank Music Corp., (ASCAP)
- 15 **Someday You'll Be Sorry** (3:11)
(Louis Armstrong)
International Music, (ASCAP)
- 16 **Fifty-Fifty Blues** (2:57)
(Billy Moore, Jr.)
Belltone Music, (ASCAP)
- 17 **A Song Was Born** (3:18)
(Don Raye-Gene DePaul)
George Simon, Inc., (ASCAP)
- 18 **Please Stop
Playing Those Blues, Boy** (3:15)
(Claude Demetrius-Fleecie Moore)
Leeds Music Corp., (ASCAP)
- 19 **Before Long** (2:52)
(Sid Catlett-Carl Sigman)
Copyright Control
- 20 **Lovely Weather We're Having** (3:15)
(John Devries-Joe Bushkin)
Joseph Bushkin/John Devries, (ASCAP)

This group of classic Louis Armstrong small band performances from the Forties was made by a collective personnel including:

Louis Armstrong, *Trumpet and Vocal*; Bobby Hackett, *Trumpet and Cornet*; Jack Teagarden, *Trombone and Vocal*; Vic Dickenson, Kid Ory, *Trombone*; Barney Bigard, Peanuts Hucko, *Clarinet*; Ernie Caceres, *Clarinet and Baritone Saxophone*; Charlie Beal, Leonard Feather, Dick Cary, Johnny Guarneri, *Piano*; Allan Reuss, Bud Scott, Al Casey, *Guitar*; Red Callender, Bob Haggart, Al Hall, Arvell Shaw, *Bass*; Zutty Singleton, Minor Hall, Sid Catlett, George Wettling, Cozy Cole, *Drums*

Discographical Information

I Want A Little Girl; Sugar:

Louis Armstrong, *Trumpet and Vocal*; Vic Dickenson, *Trombone*; Barney Bigard, *Clarinet*; Charlie Beal, *Piano*; Allan Reuss, *Guitar*; Red Callender, *Bass*; Zutty Singleton, *Drums*. Los Angeles, September 6, 1946.

Blues For Yesterday; Blues In The South:

Same, But Leonard Feather, *Piano*, for Beal

Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans; Where The Blues Were Born In New Orleans; Mahogany Hall Stomp:

Louis Armstrong, *Trumpet and Vocal*; Kid Ory, *Trombone*; Barney Bigard, *Clarinet*; Charlie Beal,

Piano; Bud Scott, *Guitar*; Red Callender, *Bass*; Minor Hall, *Drums*. Los Angeles, October 17, 1946.

Ain't Misbehavin'; Rockin' Chair; Back O' Town Blues:

Louis Armstrong, *Trumpet and Vocal*; Bobby Hackett, *Trumpet*; Jack Teagarden, *Trombone and Vocal*; Peanuts Hucko, *Clarinet*; Dick Cary, *Piano*; Bob Haggart, *Bass*; Sid Catlett, *Drums*. Recorded in performance, Town Hall, New York City, May 17, 1947.

Save It, Pretty Mama; St. James Infirmary:

Same, Except George Wettling, *Drums*, for Catlett

Jack-Armstrong Blues; Rockin' Chair; Someday You'll Be Sorry; Fifty-Fifty Blues:

Louis Armstrong, *Trumpet and Vocal*; Bobby Hackett, *Cornet*; Jack Teagarden, *Trombone and Vocal*; Peanuts Hucko, *Clarinet and Tenor Saxophone*; Ernie Caceres, *Clarinet and Baritone Saxophone*; Johnny Guarneri, *Piano and Celeste*; Al Casey, *Guitar*; Al Hall, *Bass*; Cozy Cole, *Drums*. New York City, June. 10, 1947.

A Song Was Born; Please Stop Playing; Those Blues, Boy; Before Long; Lovely Weather We're Having:

Louis Armstrong, *Trumpet and Vocal*; Jack Teagarden, *Trombone and Vocal*; Barney Bigard, *Clarinet*; Dick Cary, *Piano*; Arvell Shaw, *Bass*; Sid Catlett, *Drums*. Chicago, October 16, 1947.

No one—not his devoted manager, Joe Glaser; not the critics, whether pro or con about his current position in the world of jazz; not even the great man himself—could have foreseen that he was standing at the threshold of his most glorious years, of worldwide fame and acclaim even greater than what he'd already achieved.

In April of 1946, when he entered the RCA Victor recording studios to begin a newly signed contract (his first with the label in 13 years, almost to the day—from April 26, 1933, to April 27, 1946), he was at the helm of a big band, as he'd been since 1929. The sound of his horn had first been captured by a recording device on April 6, 1923, with King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band. Thus, he stood almost exactly at mid-point of his recording career, since his last studio date took place in August 1970.

It was twilight time for the big bands; the war had taken its toll; expenses were skyrocketing; nightlife was subsiding, and TV was on the horizon. Louis' band had been in or near the top 10 grossers for many years, but by 1946, the gate receipts were down. His bands had always worked hard, so strings of one-nighters were nothing new. But the old stability of personnel was no more; this was basically a young band, and not a well-paid one, though Glaser drove his hardest bargains for Louis. Work in the movies—there had been four since 1942—helped a bit, but there were no sponsored radio shows as in the past, and few first-class venues.

And there had been almost no recording—a year's gap between a Decca session in January 1945 and an Esquire All-Star date for Victor. Glaser must have been unhappy with Decca, with whom Louis had been for 10 years, but that in itself is a comment on what was going on. The war years had brought new trends in jazz, and by early 1946, bebop was a fact of the jazz life. And bop—or modern jazz—wasn't just a music, it was an attitude. As with any movement, the disciples and cult-followers were more radical than the originators. Dizzie Gillespie admired Louis, and in fact the two men were friends. Charlie Parker never said a bad word about Pops. But there were plenty of others who dumped on him at every opportunity, and plenty of opportunities were offered in the pages of *Down Beat* and *Metronome*. Journalistic feuds between boppers and "moldy figs" had been raging for some time; the roots of this battle of the poison pens went back to prebop days and had to do with tensions between the rediscovered New Orleans tradition and the increasing sophistication of swing.

Louis was caught in the middle. He was the man who wrote the book of jazz—as Miles Davis would say years later, "nobody can play a note on the horn that Pops hasn't played." The whole vocabulary of mature jazz was based on Armstrong phrases, Armstrong rhythms, Armstrong transformations. But to the fanatical adherents of Bunk Johnson and "true" New Orleans jazz, he was the man who'd broken the ensemble mold and who hadn't played "real jazz"

since he stopped making records with the Hot Five. And to the equally fanatical modernists, he was a has-been, not only in terms of music but as the incarnation of the jazzman as entertainer.

In truth, Louis was keeping up with the times. Not that Louis was tampering with his style, and why should he, but, as always, there were subtle changes: in tone, in phrasing, in approach to melody. And while he'd had some embouchure problems from time to time (no wonder, as hard and as much as he played), he was in very good shape at this stage of the game.

Yet there was no question that the big-band format, which was the perfect choice for Louis in 1929 and served him well for many years, had become a bit inhibiting. Arrangements were becoming more complex, there was a dearth of new songs of potential evergreen caliber, and the ideal format for big band Armstrong, in which the band played a purely supporting role, was not likely to satisfy young musicians with sufficient talent to play their parts well. (It's worth noting that Dexter Gordon had been with Louis a bit earlier on, and that he was quite well featured. When somebody really had it, Pops saw that he got his innings, at least in live performances.)

From time to time, even at the peak of the big-band era, there had been glimpses of Louis with small groups, such as the famous 1938 WNEW broadcast that teamed him with Fats Waller and Jack Teagarden, and the 1940 recording studio reunion with Sidney Bechet, as well as recording dates with small combinations, both from his own

ranks and with studio casts. In all of these, he showed that he could still function in more intimate surroundings though the "grand gesture" of the man with the horn in front of an orchestra was also apparent, not surprisingly. And of course Decca had teamed him with various (and sometimes unlikely) acts, such as the Mills Brothers, the Polynesian, and, more recently, Ella Fitzgerald.

In early 1944, Leonard Feather, whose involvement with jazz came about as a result of hearing Louis' *West End Blues* as a teenager and who, in spite of his championing of the modern school, always remained an Armstrong loyalist, enlisted Louis' participation in a jazz extravaganza staged by Esquire magazine at New York's Metropolitan Opera House. While not in top form, and as usual coming in for the date on the run, Louis was pleased to be with old friend Jack Teagarden (Barney Bigard and Sid Catlett, like Big T also future Armstrong All Stars, were on hand too) but less ecstatic about having to contend with a feisty Roy Eldridge, who many years later admitted to me that he was out for blood that night. It didn't quite get to be the cutting contest Roy would have liked, but almost.

This experience convinced Feather that Louis ought to return to a small-group format, and he started to plant hints in Glaser's ear when the opportunity arose. A session in early December of 1944 organized for V-Discs, a recording project supplying members of the Armed Forces with union-sanctioned free entertainment, by Feather's friend and colleague George Simon, then the edi-

tor of *Metronome* magazine, supplied further ammunition. It was a reunion with Teagarden and gave birth to **Jack-Armstrong Blues**, an apt vehicle for their combined talents, which they would take for a ride again a few years later.

On January 17, 1945, at the Second Esquire All-American Concert, which took place in New Orleans, Louis was again hooked up with Bechet, plus old alumnus, J. C. Higginbotham and, for one number, the man who was now claiming to have been his teacher, Bunk Johnson. (Louis, who'd been instrumental in Bunk's rediscovery and given him a brand-new horn, was less than pleased with the older man's exaggerations of their relationship, but characteristically didn't ring the bell on Bunk until after his death. At that point, Louis stated that he'd listened to Bunk as a kid, certainly, but that Bunk had been much too busy to pay any attention to him, and never had given him a single lesson.)

Less than a month later, Louis fronted a small group on a Fats Waller memorial broadcast, and on the occasion of the 1946 Esquire Awards, Feather produced a record date that brought Louis together with some notable Ellingtonians (including Duke himself) and such swing stars as Don Byas, Charlie Shavers and Chubby Jackson. But Feather's ambition, to present Louis with a small band in Carnegie Hall, had to wait another year. In between came the production of a major feature film, "New Orleans," in which Louis was prominently featured. It served as grist for Feather's mill, since it cast Louis as leader of a hot little combo in Storyville (where else?), performing in an updated

New Orleans style. Such old friends as trombonist Kid Ory (in whose band Louis had his first big time job in 1917), drummer Zutty Singleton (a boyhood friend and very close associate until they had a tiff in 1930) and Barney Bigard (the New Orleans-born former Ellington star now working with Ory) were enlisted for the film, as was Billie Holiday, who'd modeled her singing style on Louis.

This picture has not fared well in the history books, mainly because much is made of the casting of Billie as a maid. Yet she's seen more frequently off the job than on, looking mighty glamorous. The story is silly and the main cast weak, but there is plenty of good music, as well as a preposterously funny Hollywood version of the closing of Storyville. For the grand finale, there's a concert at Carnegie Hall, with Louis leading his big band, Billie singing a number with it and, for some unknown reason, an appearance by the Woody Herman band. For Louis, at this stage, the film was beneficial, and its score (by Louis Alter) produced one standard-to-be, **Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans**.

Louis' presence in Los Angeles gave Feather the opportunity to organize a session (on behalf of Charles Delauney's French Swing label in association with RCA) that featured Louis with some members of the movie band and a few ringers. A session with the big band also took place in L.A., followed (on the same day) by one with the little film band, all of music from the picture.

Feather now went to work on Louis and Glaser again, the movie's finale providing a perfect ratio-

nale for a Carnegie Hall concert. After much back and forth, Edmond Hall's fine little band from Cafe Society Uptown was selected to work with Louis for the first half of the concert, while the big band (which Feather didn't really want) was featured on the second, with a cameo appearance by Billie and a guest shot for Big Sid Catlett. This concert, on February 8, 1947, produced almost unanimous critical opinion to the effect that Louis was far better served by the small group. But both Louis, who said he didn't "want to throw 18 cats out of work," and Glaser were stubborn men, and the big band was revived.

A week after the concert, disc jockey Art Ford had Louis and Jack Teagarden on his popular WNEW broadcast, plugging the film and playing together. In April, one of Feather's chief antagonists in the jazz press, Rudi Blesh, whose "This Is Jazz" broadcast was on a national network, featured Louis with the house band, which included such former Armstrong associates as Albert Nicholas, Pops Foster and Baby Dodds, with splendid results. This was the prelude to the big event that sounded the final death knell for the big band: the famous May 17, 1947, Town Hall Concert (in fact, concerts: one at eight, the other at midnight, to fill the great demand for tickets).

The Town Hall event was produced by yet another Feather foe, the publicist Ernie Anderson, who was a close friend of Eddie Condon. A portion of the concerts was professionally recorded and later issued by RCA; additional material, not as well recorded, surfaced and appeared in Europe

some 30 years later. Teagarden again proved himself the ideal partner for Louis—nobody could be a star while sharing the stage with Pops, but Jack came as close as anyone. One of Louis' most steadfast admirers, Bobby Hackett, rehearsed the band (as usual, Louis was on the road and barely managed to get to Town Hall for a 5 o'clock run-through). Two great drummers, Big Sid Catlett and George Wettling, took turns with the group, which also included clarinetist Peanuts Hucko, bassist Bob Haggart, and pianist Dick Cary. The latter was responsible for the arrangements. Fred Robbins, then perhaps the best jazz disc jockey anywhere, emceed and delivered a spirited panegyric to Armstrong.

The Carnegie Hall reviews had been good; the Town Hall ones were ecstatic. Even Glaser now saw the light, and the big band was put on notice. RCA wasted no time, and by June 10, Louis was in the studios with Teagarden, Hackett and Hucko from the Town Hall cast, Ernie Caceres as an added hornman, and a superb rhythm section. The four sides they cut reflected the Armstrong-Teagarden magic. Jack had also struggled for years with a big band and was only too happy to sign with Glaser as a member of the projected Armstrong All Stars.

But first there was more movie business to take care of. Louis presided over the gala opening of "New Orleans" at the Winter Garden on Broadway on June 18, again with Big T, Hackett and most of the Town Hall Cast. It was another triumph for the new format. Then Louis took a good rest (after a

final appearance with the big band at Harlem's Apollo Theater in July) and hiked out to Hollywood once again in early August to begin shooting "A Song Is Born," in which Benny Goodman had a star acting part, and such luminaries as Tommy Dorsey, Charlie Barnet and Lionel Hampton also participated. The picture was quite amusing, and had none of the questionable "old South" overtones of "New Orleans."

Even before the shooting was completed, the Louis Armstrong All Stars made their official debut at Billy Berg's famous jazz club in Los Angeles, on August 13, 1947. Teagarden, Bigard, Dick Cary and Sid Catlett were in that first lineup, plus the two sole holdovers from the big band, bassist Arvell Shaw, a gifted youngster, and singer Velma Middleton, with Louis since 1942 and a friend for longer than that. The opening was covered by *Time*, which reported that Hoagy Carmichael, Johnny Mercer, Woody Herman and other Armstrong fans were on hand. A few weeks later, the All Stars made their concert debut at one of Gene Norman's popular "Just Jazz" concerts in Pasadena, then moved on for a long run in Chicago, where their first studio record date took place.

The All Stars were off and running, and they never looked back. Louis' first trip to Europe since 1935 came in February 1948, at the very first of a new genre, the jazz festival. It took place in Nice, and one of Louis' staunchest admirers and defenders, Hugues Panassie had a hand in it. Followed by concerts in Paris, the brief tour was a monu-

mental success for the All Stars (now with Earl Hines on the piano bench—another big-band leader who'd thrown in the towel) starting off what would soon become a schedule of overseas engagements matched by no other jazz attraction, not to mention films, television stints and tons of recordings.

It is safe to say that among performing artists of the 20th century, only Charlie Chaplin was as universally recognized as Louis Armstrong. The golden horn, the gravelly voice, the famous smile were seen and heard in every corner of the globe. Soon after the last record in this album was made, Louis was on his way to the greatest triumphs of his career, leaving behind the infights and arguments of the world of jazz, indeed outgrowing that particular world and reaching far beyond its confines.

Happily, Armstrong lived long enough to see the day when musicians and fans who had once vilified and belittled him came around to sing his praises. His 70th birthday was the occasion for an unprecedented outpouring of love and respect from every corner of jazz, in public and in print. At the 1970 Newport Jazz Festival, Dizzie Gillespie, presiding over a host of trumpeters paying tribute, identified Louis as "the man to whom I owe my living."

Louis would be happy today to hear the brilliant young trumpeter Wynton Marsalis (born in New Orleans) hail him as a hero and, better yet, to know that Marsalis finds inspiration in listening to his records. For in spite of his enormous public success, the love and respect of his fellow musi-

cians meant more to him than anything else. The music, as he put it, was his "living and life." He can rest assured that it will live as long as human beings have ears and hearts.

The recordings on this disc show that years of playing with big bands had not adversely affected Louis' ability to take charge of a smaller jazz group. Of course, no matter what the context, he would be cynosure. But he was nonetheless a master of relaxed, intimate expression, something a small group gave him a better chance to show (**Sugar** and **Someday**, for two examples). In any case, the time was ripe for a change, and he was ready.

The small band put together for Louis by Leonard Feather is a fine one. The ringers are Allan Reuss of Goodman-fame, one of the all-time best rhythm guitarists, and Vic Dickenson, the incomparable trombone stylist, who loved Louis and wanted to be with the All Stars more than anything in life, but never got the chance. Next to Louis, he scores the most runs here. Barney Bigard's pretty, lacy clarinet goes well with the brass team, and he solos nicely. Zutty Singleton was Louis' favorite drummer (he loved Sid Catlett, but Zutty gave him something special on the bass drum that nobody else could match), and one feels how absolutely secure Pops is with Zutty at the helm. **I Want a Little Girl** is a fine song, and Louis' version is perfect, but **Sugar** is even better. The phrasing he uses here (on both tunes) is seemingly simple, but filled with lovely little touches of rhythmic and melodic displacements that make

those melodies his property. Vic is great, both in solos and behind Louis. All this holds true as well for the two blues, neither of which is terribly profound, though Pops almost makes you believe. Feather takes Charlie Beal's place at the piano for these two (at Zutty's suggestion, he says) and doesn't do any harm.

The band from "New Orleans" is rougher, mainly due to the presence of Kid Ory. The veteran trombonist, well embarked on his second career, had lots of power but little finesse. He did what he did very well but was a limited player. On **Do You Know What It Means** Louis is sublime, but Ory's slides grate a bit, Bigard is fine. **Where the Blues Were Born** is one of those "meet the band" numbers, and remained in the All Stars' repertory until it was displaced by *Now You Has Jazz*. Everybody gets a shot here, including guitarist Bud Scott, another New Orleans veteran, but Louis' rideout is the thing. **Mahogany Hall Stomp**, the only instrumental in our small-group segment, was first waxed by Louis in 1929, again in 1933, then in 1935, and after this 1946 version, many more times, most significantly as part of the monumental 1957-58 "Autobiography" set. This is not the greatest of these many versions, but it has its charms, such as Ory's rowdy chorus contrasting with Bigard's delicate one, and Louis' fine rideout. For some reason, drummer Minor Hall replaced Zutty on this session.

Back O' Town Blues shows us how relaxed and happy things were at Town Hall on that fateful night. The number, one of Louis' own, had been

waxed during the next-to-last session with his big band; it would remain in the All Stars' book to the end. Louis leads the laid-back ensemble, and sings (with backing from Bobby Hackett, Peanuts Hucko, and Teagarden in turn. The interpolated "shut up, boy", apparently in response to someone calling out from the audience, became part of the song's routine. Tea takes one of his special choruses on the slow blues, and then Louis leads it on out, very high up on the horn.

Ain't Misbehavin' had been introduced by Louis in 1929, when he appeared on Broadway in "Hot Chocolates," and he recorded it during the show's run. It picks right up; no introduction needed. Louis leads, and Bobby Hackett completes the chorus to let Louis get to the vocal mike. Tea backs the fine singing, Peanuts takes a half chorus and the inimitable Hackett finishes it, the trombone has its say, and then Louis caps it with what by then had become a "set" solo, including the Gershwin quote. Big Sid Catlett's drumming is well in evidence—he loved to play for Pops.

Rockin' Chair was another standard launched by Louis in 1929, on a record with the composer, Hoagy Carmichael, as his vocal partner. It belonged to Louis from then on, and Teagarden was not only the ideal foil, but a peer as well. They have fun here, utterly relaxed as they trade banter. Hackett's ensemble role should again be noted, and Louis' brief trumpet climax is compelling.

Save It Pretty Mama, at the risk of being redundant, was also premiered by Pops—in 1928, with composer Don Redman on hand to augment

the Armstrong second "Hot Five." Appropriately, Dick Cary recalls Earl Hines in his introduction; then Louis plays a lovely exposition, using a straight mute. More good Carey piano, a splendid vocal, some choice Tea, and then open horn by the master, who was in rare form that night, to conclude a gem of a performance.

St. James Infirmary was a Teagarden special, and it's his from start to finish here. Jack, too was in prime shape for the occasion, and I think this **St. James** caps all his others on record. He opens with two choruses of superb trombone, sings like only he could, and then does his act (so musically rewarding that it's not an act at all) of playing with a water glass as substitute for the trombone's bell. The sound is unique and perfect for the blues, and Jack puts a growl in it. Dig that low note at coda's end!

Three weeks later, in RCA's New York studios, Teagarden, Hackett and Hucko were back with Louis, and the rest of the cast weren't strangers, either. The entire rhythm section, excepting guitarist Al Casey, had been on hand for the 1944 V-Disc session, and so had Ernie Caceres, while Casey had worked with Pops on the Waller memorial. **Jack-Armstrong Blues**, born at that V-Disc date, had been performed at Town Hall as well, but I liked this version the best. Johnny Guarneri, a fine pianist, sets a Basie groove with help from Al Casey, Al Hall and Cozy Cole (a future Armstrong All Star), and then Jack and Louis take fours, vocally and instrumentally, until Jackson asks Louis to "send me out just right." Louis does

just that, with five choruses (the final one jammed, the others with organ and riff backgrounds). He sails here, and his tone and choice of blues harmony are special and very "modern." This **Rockin' Chair** is faster than the Town Hall version—it had to be, to fit the whole routine into the 10-inch 78 time-frame. But to my mind, that doesn't hurt at all—it's just as relaxed, but with a swinging edge to it. There was, I'm sure, a special electricity in the studio that day. Louis' **Someday** is one of the most famous compositions; the lyric, too, is his. Tune detectives claim it's very like a little-known 1930's pop called *Goodnight Angel*. It's a lovely piece, and this first version is a gem, Guarnieri's celeste lending it a special intimacy. Tea's few bars are gorgeous, and Louis' trumpet and voice seem to become one. **Fifty-Fifty Blues**, by ex-Lunceford arranger Billie Moore, Jr., is not quite as caloric as **Jack-Armstrong**, but offers more of that special magic these two could create, and fine individual efforts. Louis' horn again has that special 1947 flavor, unlike anything he played before or since—very mellow, almost reflective.

The All Stars' first studio date finds them still in search of identity. The main attraction is the Armstrong-Teagarden magic, and Jackson is heavily featured. **A Song Was Born** is, of course, from the eponymous picture, and based on *Goin' Home*. Jack introduces it with a lovely sound and complete control; there's some fine singing and a change of tempo for Louis' turn (with different lyrics). Dig how Mr. T sets up Louis for his trumpet solo. No wonder they got along so well. **Please**

Stop Playing Those Blues, Boy is made bearable by the two stars' vocal banter and more than bearable by their playing, and the other guys do all right, too. **Before Long** is another story. This very attractive melody was composed by Sid Catlett, and Louis gives it his special treatment. Teagarden is very relaxed here, playing with a lustrous sound. Pops is some ballad singer—second to none. **Lovely Weather We're Having** was a collaboration between two Louis fans, Joe Bushkin and Johnny De Vries, and it's a pleasant, sophisticated song. Louis' *a cap* intro is beautiful, as is his lead solo. Jack backs the vocal with a mute and perfect taste, and then Louis takes it out as only he can. Dick Cary is a fine accompanist, and so's Arvell.

The weather forecast would indeed remain most favorable, for decades to come.

—Dan Morgenstern
*Director, Institute of Jazz Studies
Rutgers University*

513248W



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Total Time

68:20

A D D

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

513248W

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